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Film flashes of the European front: The war diary of Albert K. Dawson, 1915–1916

Ron van Dopperen and Cooper C. Graham

Researching the films of the First World War is like piecing together a giant jigsaw puzzle. After nearly a hundred years, most of the photographers have faded away into oblivion. Their stories about what it was like to film the Great War were usually forgotten. Their films were cut into historical documentaries or simply destroyed. Seldom do we have the chance to follow the cameraman into the trenches and watch his films as they were shot at the front. The publication of parts of the notebook of Albert K. Dawson, issued in 1917 but neglected by film historians, and the recent discovery of some of his footage in the American film archives provides us with such a rare opportunity.

In 1990, *Film History* published an article by Ron van Dopperen on Albert Dawson and his work for the American Correspondent Film Company.[1] This study focused on the movies that were produced by the American Correspondent Film Company in 1915–1916, as part of a film propaganda campaign in the United States by the German government. The intention of this campaign was to picture the German side of the war, using neutral American photographers like Dawson as a "front man" for their organisation in order to increase the propaganda value of these war films. Since this publication, new information has been found on Albert Dawson, his background as a cameraman, his frontline experiences, and his films, which merits an updated story.

The cameraman

"We are three partners, all young men, and, while not the largest or oldest firm in our line, I think it is safe to say that we are one of the most energetic. Between the three of us we have covered almost the entire globe in the last five years, making negatives for our stock."[2]

This was how Albert Knox Dawson described Brown & Dawson, his photographic company, in the Spring of 1917. Looking back, Dawson had every reason to be pleased. Born in Vincennes (Indiana) on 20 September 1885, Albert was the oldest son of Thomas A. Dawson and Lida Thompson Knox. His father was a South Carolina native who grew up poor in the eastern mountains of Tennessee, joined the Union Army at the age of fifteen, was wounded in the battle of Resaca and settled in Vincennes in 1879, where he started as a farmer and became a successful business man in real estate. Although he had a working-class background Thomas was committed to self-education during his entire life, reading history

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and traveling across the country to improve himself whenever possible. Until late in his life, his son Albert had the same intellectual urge to read, to write and to discover new horizons. It also made him into a restless man, with a natural tendency to be harsh on himself. In a letter to his sister Rose, written in July 1947, Albert looked back on his life on a typically melancholy note: "Somehow I feel like a squirrel in a cage, run like hell year after year and then, at the end, I have gotten nowhere and have nothing to show for it".[3]

When he wrote these lines Dawson probably had forgotten about the time he was one of the most active American cinematographers in the First World War and his films of the European front were seen by thousands of people in their local theatres. But when Dawson left his hometown behind in 1912, shortly after the death of his father, these days were still to come, and he was a relatively unknown freelance photographer from the Midwest. He had started his career as a cameraman for the local newspaper, the *Vincennes Western Sun*, where he made his mark in news photography, later delivering pictures for various magazines and newspapers. His breakthrough in photography came soon after leaving Vincennes, when he realized that with the growing public demand for pictures there were some interesting commercial opportunities in building up his own stock photo agency.

This was where his colleague Charles d'Emery came in. Like Dawson, d'Emery had developed a strong fascination with photography at an early age. The two young men met in New York City in 1911, where they decided to work together and stimulate the local interest in photography. They were elected as president and vice-president of the 23rd Street YMCA "Camera Club". According to a report in the trade press, an increasing number of New York photographers attended the "Camera Club" meetings organized by Dawson and d'Emery. Among the most popular presentations was a lecture by Jimmy Hare, staff cameraman of *Collier's Weekly* and at the time a leading war photographer, on his experiences during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.[4]

Both men also shared an interest in photographic engineering. In the case of Charles d' Emery, this interest developed into a professional specialty. During his career he designed prototypes for such new equipment as a revolutionary long-distance slide projector. D'Emery later used his expertise in camera design to good purpose in the 1930s when

Fig. 1. Albert Dawson with Graflex camera. From *Illustrated World*, November 1915.

he photographed the carving of the Mount Rushmore presidential portraits, an assignment he always felt very proud of. Above all, the strongest bond between Dawson and d'Emery grew out of their passion for travelling abroad. Together with d'Emery, Albert Dawson did all of the worldwide photographic assignments for their firm (their senior partner, J. Edward Brown, took care of the company's fast growing stock collection in Stamford, Connecticut).

Brown & Dawson started in 1912 as a regular photographic firm, working for the media, advertising and travel agencies, real estate companies and the like. But during the First World War the company took on a completely new line of work when it began to produce both motion picture films and regular news pictures about the war in Europe. The still pictures were mostly sold through Underwood & Underwood and were circulated widely in the American press in 1915–1916. The films were either directed by

Dawson with the assistance of a hired "Cino-Operator", or shot by Dawson himself. Although Albert Dawson was originally a still photographer, he soon learned to handle the motion picture camera as well. To get some idea of how he accomplished this, we must follow his footsteps as a war correspondent.

Deadlock on the Western Front

The winter of 1914–1915 was a scene of stalemate on the Western Front. From the English Channel to the Swiss Alps, the armies had dug in deep. Trenches and barbed wire marked the firing line in Flanders, Picardy and the Somme. Even though the major battles of the first months had petered out, trench warfare took its daily toll of victims. It was a relatively mild winter, with heavy rainfall and hardly any snow. Around Ypres, the fields and battered villages were mostly muddy and damp, and in the Ypres salient around the Belgian frontline city the Germans had fortified their positions. From the ridges they had a clear view of enemy activities.

Emmett Crozier, in his study of American reporters on the Western Front, called this winter "the Dark Age of war correspondence".[5] By January 1915 journalists like William Shepherd (United Press) and Irvin S. Cobb (*Saturday Evening Post*) had turned their backs on the war. They simply gave up, feeling disgusted by the continuous arrests, the censorship, and the lack of cooperation from the military authorities. With the appearance of trench warfare, military control over the American reporters tightened even further, and getting access to the front became practically impossible. It wasn't until the summer of 1915 that the French and British authorities began to work with accredited war correspondents; until then most reporters had to sit tight in Paris and rely on the official war communiqués.

Under these circumstances, propaganda soon gained an advantage over free journalism. In Berlin, the General Staff was persuaded by the recently appointed Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst (Central Office for Foreign Services) to allow neutral correspondents access to the Western Front. Under close surveillance they could also tour the German home front. American correspondents at this early stage of the war were particularly welcome, and the Zentralstelle – a special branch of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by former journalist Matthias Erzberger – was eager to secure the necessary military papers for reporters from the United States. Germany at the time was being severely criticized in the American press because of supposed "atrocities" committed by the invading army against Belgian civilians. Clearly, there was a need to tell the American public about the German side of the war.

After having waited a month, Dawson finally received an official permit for a visit to Germany's Western Front in January 1915. The General Staff had taken a long time to check his credentials. Dawson has left us with a vivid description how he prepared for his sudden assignment as a war photographer:

> It was in the dead of winter and after several weeks of anxious waiting [that] I received a formal note from the Foreign Office saying "Be prepared for a four weeks' trip to the front to start next Monday". I rushed around and had myself measured for a field suit, riding breeches and Norfolk jacket, like those I had seen Richard Harding Davis wearing in his pictures; sleeping bag, fur-lined overcoat, leggings, woollen cap, muffler and auto gloves.
>
> When I got it all on I looked like Peary on his home coming. Then after writing out a brief will and leaving full instructions for the disposition of my body with the hotel clerk, I looked at the sun, moon and stars for the last time and reported at the Foreign Office, feeling rather shaky. I was not alone, for there were nine of us on that trip and as each was dressed according to his own idea of trench life the costumes were startling. One fellow had a big lump under his left arm which turned out to be a gigantic revolver in a pocket scabbard.[6]

At General Staff Headquarters in Berlin, Dawson was introduced to Hans Theyer (1884–1955), an experienced Austrian cameraman who from 1907 had travelled around the world for Pathé as a newsreel photographer. Theyer's work had taken him as far as China, Alaska, the South Sea Islands, Africa and the Middle East. In 1916, together with the founding father of the Austrian film industry, producer Sascha Kolowrat, he would set up the first independent film studio in Austria. Theyer had been employed by the German film production company Messter as a cinematographer since January 1914, and when war broke out he was assigned by Messter to the German War Office to produce propaganda films. Theyer teamed up with Dawson after their meeting, and together they would film an official

documentary of the Western Front and the occupation of Belgium and Northern France.[7]

Taking the midnight train from Berlin, the two cameramen prepared for a series of movie narratives. Judging from surviving film fragments at the John E. Allen film archives, they decided to show a wide series of subjects at the front and in occupied Belgium. The footage also shows Albert Dawson at work as an American correspondent, interviewing such public figures as the United States ambassador in Berlin, James W. Gerard. The purpose of these films, as Theyer recalled, was quite clear: "I had received instructions to accompany eight American journalists and a photographer [Dawson] to the German-French front. At the request of the Central Powers, they would be given the opportunity to see for themselves that the rumours spread by the Entente about the German atrocities were false."[8]

Among these American journalists was Robert Dunn, a veteran war correspondent who worked for the *New York Post*. In his book *Five Fronts* he mentions the two "official cinema men" and the chateau life the reporters enjoyed while wining and dining with Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria and the staff of the 4th Prussian Army Corps. The party of journalists was picked up daily from their hotel in Lille. By military car they visited so many destroyed villages that Dunn established the "Ruin-Shy Club" at the back seat of the vehicle.[9] Apparently, the American reporters wanted to get closer to the front and were getting bored by visiting places like ammunition dumps and field hospitals. On 10 January 1915 the Germans decided to take them to the Headquarters of the 2nd Bavarian Corps at Comines, which was just across the border in France. Near the village of Houthem, about two miles from the frontline, the photographers filmed German artillery operations. For the benefit of the camera, the guns started their barrage early in full daylight. Dawson and Theyer probably didn't realize that this provoked the French into a counter-attack. Before they knew it, the cameramen, who had gone ahead in the direction of the trenches near the village of Hollebeke, were themselves under fire. As Theyer recalled:

> We walked through a completely devastated area. The rain had been pouring down on us and had covered the landscape with thick layers of mud. Suddenly, I saw a yellow flash in the sky, as round as a ring. I was watching this fascinating spectacle as if it were fireworks. But then I saw my colleague [Dawson] lying in the mud, and I decided to follow his example. This was when the first shell exploded. The barrage followed us quickly. I heard the shrieking sound of shrapnel going over our heads, when there was an explosion just six metres in front of us. The mud saved us at that critical moment, because instead of debris we were only covered with wet and soft lumps of earth.[10]

Fig. 2. Hans Theyer, January 1915. [Courtesy of the Austrian Film Archives.]

Theyer described how, on arrival at the German battery, he took about sixty metres of film while French shells exploded nearby. It was, he admitted, a harrowing experience to crank a motion picture camera while being fully exposed to hostile fire. "You have to battle against fear. But there is no way you can control the twitching of your own nerves. My

Fig. 3. Picture postcard from Dawson to a friend in Vincennes. His handwritten note says: "Antwerp last week. Through Belgium in a military auto." Dawson is in the back seat at the right. Dated Berlin, 24 February 1915.[Private collection of the authors.]

American colleague confessed to me later that the only reason why he kept on filming was that he did not want to embarrass himself in front of the German officers."[11]

In a remarkably frank interview with the *Indianapolis Star,* Dawson also told about his baptism of fire at the Western Front. He knew that the German battery they wanted to see was heavily shelled. But when challenged by a young Bavarian officer that he didn't dare to visit this "hot spot", he took him on for a bet:

> The French were shelling every foot of the road out to that battery and every step I took I thought would be my last. I was scared stiff. I had cold fear, my hands and feet were literally chilled to the bone. I was so frightened that I had no more control over myself than a man in the back seat has over an automobile. But my legs kept following that officer and long before I had reached that battery I had passed all feeling and simply moved along at the lieutenant's heels like an automaton. I reached the battery, however, and took movie photographs of it in action with the shells roaring all around. But I'll never forget that afternoon as long as I live.[12]

After visiting the trenches near Arras, the publicity tour for the American journalists went to Brussels. Dawson recalled how on arrival in Brussels he photographed General von Bissing, the military governor of Belgium. An officer who had been detailed to accompany him had warned Dawson not to address his Excellency until spoken to. He did not, however, anticipate Dawson's straightforward and successful methods:

> "General, I am an American", he began without embarrassment. "I can see that", said the General with a smile. "And I have come to take your picture", he added without waste of time. The situation was unprecedented. Every rule of military formality had been broken. The officer stood aghast. "Very well", he replied. "go ahead. What do you want me to do?" "If you will step to the window. Now a step this way, a little farther please. No, this way", and to the horror of the attending officer the photographer laid his hand on the General's arm and arranged the pose. The picture was taken in a few seconds.
>
> "Thank you, General", said the unabashed camera man easily. "I hope your picture turns out well", replied General von Bissing pleasantly and the interview was over. Once outside the door the officer expostulated. "How did you

> come to address his Excellency? It is most unprecedented. And you laid your hand on him. How could you?" "*Mein lieber freund*", said the American, "I have photographed three American Presidents and a general more or less is nothing to me."[13]

Apart from scenes showing daily life in the occupied Belgian capital, Dawson secured pictures showing German soldiers ploughing fields for Belgian farmers. He also visited the docks of Antwerp and the La Providence steel mills – filmed under the title "Scenes at Big Iron Works in Belgium" – which he found working at full capacity. The overall impression created by these films was probably, "in Belgium, it's back to business as usual." "The mines also seemed to be working", said Dawson. "I went down in the Mariemont-Bascoup Mine in Charleroi and saw the famous women miners. These women wear trousers just like men and can swing a pick or wield a shovel with equal speed. They seemed to be a husky, healthy lot and perfectly able to handle a day's work."[14]

Having gone south to the forests of the French Argonne – a relatively quiet sector of the front – Dawson and Theyer captured pictures of the elaborate trench works built by the Germans. Well camouflaged and with ample provisions for shelter and comfort, the soldiers seemed to have constructed a new *Unter den Linden*. The surviving footage shows a "human interest" scene from this frontline sector, the printing of the newspaper *Hurrah* for the men in the trenches. Lost on film, but not on photo, was a scene of a German flamethrower in action in the Argonne photographed by Dawson. The *New York Times* called it the first picture of this new means of warfare to reach the United States.[15]

More than just a line of trenches, Dawson called the German defences at the Western Front "the catacombs of war". He compared these strongholds to the boundaries of the Roman Empire and gave a graphic account of the impregnable barbed wire: "I have seen entanglements where I know men had tried to charge through. And I have peeped through the loopholes to where grim forms hung, contorted in the entanglement where the last charge broke as a wave breaks on the shore."[16] The underground camps he visited showed how the Germans adapted to natural circumstances and incorporated abandoned mines and quarries into their frontline system. In the chalk hills around Soissons, for instance, Dawson pictured an enormous cave where over 3,000 soldiers were encamped, using the modern benefits of electric lights and a ventilating system.

When Dawson took these pictures he was close to the firing line, within just one kilometre of Soissons. January 1915 had been a bloody month for the German First Army in this frontline sector, which was under the command of von Kluck, the General who had commanded the right wing during the massive outflanking sweep through Belgium and Northern France. The frontline had finally stabilized on the banks of the river Aisne. But it had taken von Kluck's soldiers a fierce battle to push the French back across the river to defend Soissons. Dawson's pictures taken at this time illustrate the German counteroffensive. Air scouts in a remarkable display of improvised bombardment are seen dropping hand grenades during a raid. In the same series is a striking picture of German soldiers going over the top, charging the French in an open field while under fire. This remarkable scene was supposedly captured by setting up a steel plate on the parapet of the trench. The result looks impressive, with a dead German soldier on the foreground, but the scene may have been staged for the camera.

Inside the German Empire

Altogether, Dawson's and Theyer's film work on the Western Front was relatively short, and by the end of February they were back in Berlin. Under Secretary of State Arthur Zimmermann referred to their footage in a diplomatic dispatch to the German ambassador in the United States, von Bernstorff, on 1 March: "In a recent journey to Belgium undertaken by official orders and to the West Front 800 metres of film were taken, wherein the American correspondent Dawson appeared. The original negative of this film will be sent to New York as soon as possible, so that as many copies as desirable may be prepared there."[17] In this same communiqué Zimmermann initiated a permanent German film propaganda program in the United States, which ultimately resulted in the incorporation of the American Correspondent Film Company in April 1915.

As part of a deal with the Messter company, the footage shot by Theyer and Dawson was given to James F.J. Archibald, a journalist from Chicago who had accompanied the German and Austrian army for *Scribner's Magazine* and would use the official film for his lectures on the war. A noted war correspondent, Archibald had been a reporter during

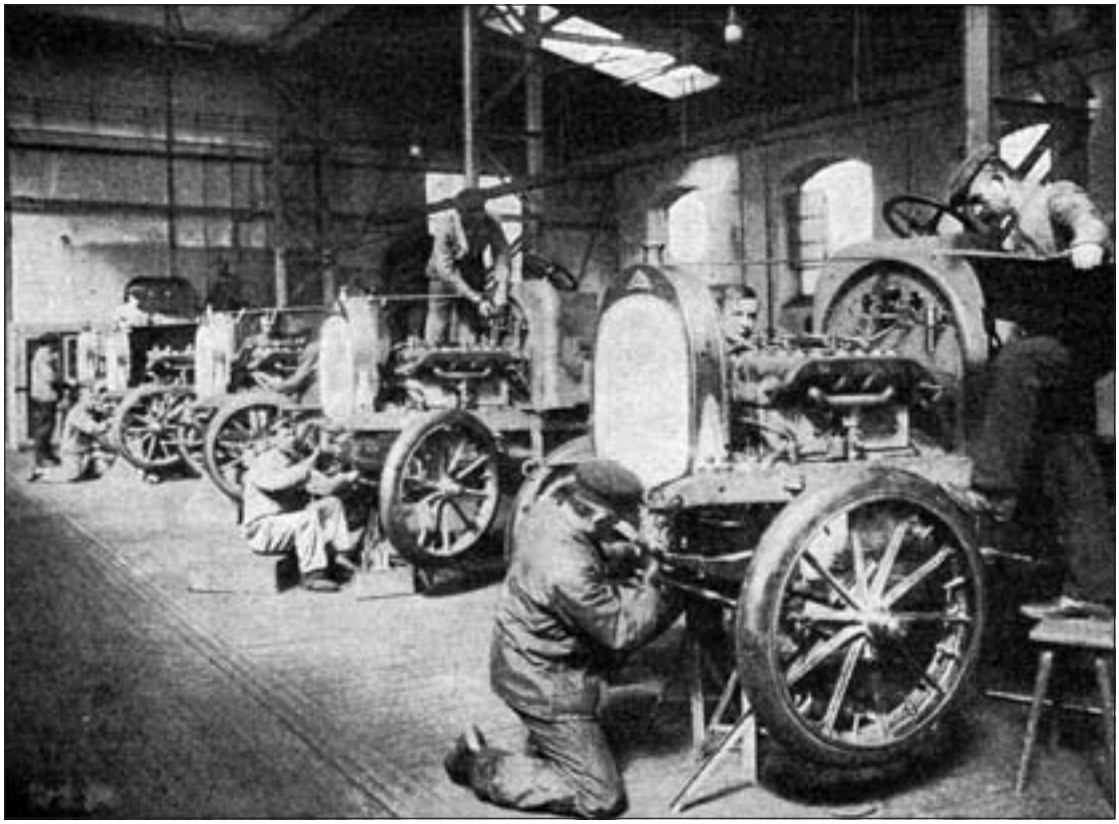

Fig. 4. Assembling one-ton army trucks at Hansa-Lloyd. [Photo ©Brown & Dawson. From *Scientific American*, 3 February 1917.]

the Spanish-American war in Cuba, the Boer war in South-Africa and the Russo-Japanese conflict. Shortly after the First World War he was exposed by the United States Secret Service as a propagandist for the German government. Although only a few fragments of the original war film have so far been located, a letter in the *New York Times* indicates that Archibald's presentation was blatantly pro-German: "Those pictures which showed the Germans and the Belgians together were such as to disarm any criticism of Germany – a German soldier with a Belgian babe nestled in his hand, a squad of German soldiers with smiling faces distributing soup to the people, a soldier who had been billeted upon a Belgian family taking a most friendly farewell of his host and hostess – all obviously 'staged'".[18]

While Archibald toured the United States with his lectures on the German side of the war, Albert Dawson travelled within Germany, filming the industrial mobilisation, the prison camps and food supplies. He described his experiences inside the German Empire in a series of articles for *Scientific American*, which were published in January and February 1917, shortly before the American entry into the war. This may explain a statement like, "Whatever the policy of the leaders may be, I have always found the common soldiers of Germany generous and tender hearted".[19]

The German Empire in 1914–1918 was a fully industrialized nation. The majority of the people were working in trade or factories. Industry was the backbone of the Imperial army. Dawson was one of the few American film correspondents who pictured both sides of this story and grasped the importance of the interaction between the fighting front and the economic strength of Germany. Writing for *Scientific American*, Dawson emphasized the strategic advantages of the German war industry. He called attention to the many plants that had changed their production to wartime products, the stimulating way the government directed this transformation, and the strong trade position of Germany. While his report demonstrated that he understood all this perfectly well, sometimes his camera couldn't show all the details. No pictures were permitted, for instance, at the Deutsche Gas-Motor Fabrik in Cologne, where the company produced power plants for new submarines and airplanes. But Dawson did manage to film at the

Fig. 5. "The End of Bravery." Dead Russian soldiers near Fort 10, filmed by Dawson in June 1915 during the siege of Przemysl. Frame enlargement from *Battles of A Nation*. [©American Correspondent Film Company, November 1915. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.]

Rheinische Metal Fabrik at Düsseldorf, where he took pictures of many new types and calibres of field artillery. Dawson also tried to film the German navy. Trying to bluff his way into a naval station, however, he found himself placed under technical arrest. He was put back on a train to Berlin the next day.[20]

Albert Dawson openly admired the German talent for organisation, as is shown when he reported how a Great National Bread Trust – "the biggest corner on grain since the days of the Pharaoh" – protected the country from famine.[21] The meat supply, although on ration, was still plentiful. The major storage plants in the German cities were guarded night and day. Making pictures or films was strictly forbidden. However, because of his connections with the Hamburg-America Line, Dawson could have a look inside. Parts of his work in this field which have long been considered lost, like scenes of the public markets in Berlin, have now been traced in the American film archives (see below).

Germany during World War I had to feed, cloth and guard more then three million prisoners of war. According to Dawson, the food question was the one problem which gave the Germans most concern. But by introducing a well-balanced ration they kept the situation under control. "In all the prisons I visited, I never saw a man who looked half nourished or under fed; but the same men often complained that they were being starved."[22] He also mentioned the daily life in the camps and the cultural differences between the prisoners: the Russians, "simple minded and obedient", who proved to be of great help harvesting the crops; the French, "always good natured and smiling"; the English and colonial troops, with their different religions.[23] Again, as reported by Dawson, the German sense of organisation kept the number of guards down to a minimum. In his pictures Dawson highlighted the special attention given by the Germans to the prisoners. This was shown by scenes of the prison fire brigade, the library, the barber shop and the line-up on "Blue Monday" for a weekly shower. His films of the German prison camps were incorporated into his documentary *Friends and Foes* (1915).

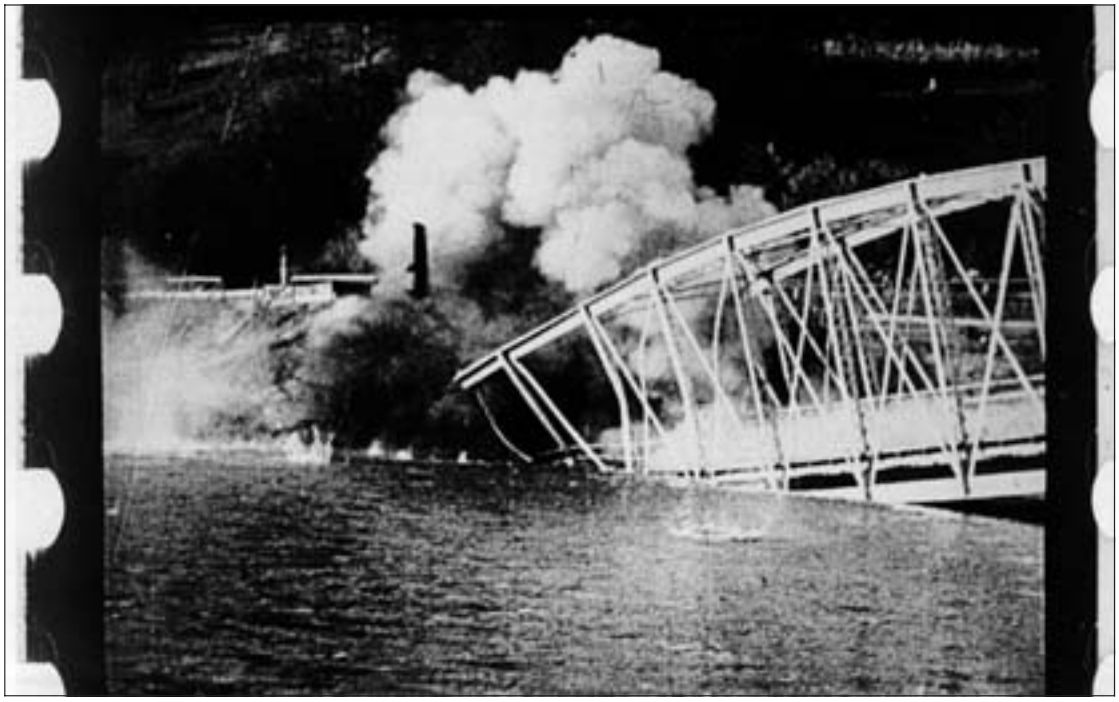

Fig. 6. Demolition squad exploding a bridge near Biala. Film frame from *The Battle and Fall of Przemysl*. [Courtesy of the Library of Congress.]

The Road to Ivangorod

Dawson left Berlin in May to cover the combined Austro-German drive against the Russian army. He attached himself to the Austrian army and followed the attack north across Galicia. The Eastern Front at this time had attracted several American film correspondents. As described in *Film History* by Cooper Graham, Wilbur H. Durborough captured the fall of Warsaw and later toured the United States with his German war pictures. Edwin F. Weigle, staff photographer of the *Chicago Tribune,* was on the spot to film the siege of the Russian forts at Przemysl.[24] Together with his Swedish camera assistant John Everitt, Dawson also filmed the attack on the Przemysl forts. The damage was stupendous, reported Dawson, especially around Fort no. 10. A little to the back of it was a wood where the Russians had tried to find shelter. The machine guns had been turned upon them, and after the siege Dawson could scarcely take a step without coming across their remains. On 3 June 1915, after a forced march with the advanced guard, he finally entered the town of Przemysl. His film work resulted in the four-reel feature *The Battle and Fall of Przemysl*, which was released in the United States in August 1915.

Soon after completing this film Dawson had the chance to film the military offensive into Poland. The road led to Ivangorod (Dêblin). Thanks to the publication in the magazine *Deutsch-Amerika* of parts of the diary that he kept at the European front we have a unique opportunity to analyze his film work during this campaign. How Dawson's notebook came to be published remains a matter of speculation. In a series of five weekly articles during January and February 1917, the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* ran a feature story about his experiences as a cameraman following the trail of the Austrian and German army at the Eastern Front. Dawson, described by the editor as a "deutschfreundlich neutraler Amerikaner", had agreed to the publication of his diary in German translation.[25] The timing is remarkable, with the United States at the brink of war against Germany. But because the magazine catered to a pro-German audience, Dawson may have thought no harm would come out of it. As with his contributions to *Scientific American*, Dawson may also have considered it newsworthy to give the American public an inside look of the war as it was fought by the Central Powers. Propagandistic considerations apart, the decision by the editor to publish this notebook remains something to be grateful for, because the diary – which appears to be a full translation of the original manuscript – is an important historical source for World War I film history. Dawson's first-hand account, together with parts of his footage shot at this stage of the war, gives us the opportunity to recon-

struct a major military campaign of the Great War as seen through the eyes of an American film correspondent. From an historical point of view, this campaign – the Austro-German drive towards Ivangorod – played an important role. Strategically located near the river Vistula, the forts guarded the southern flank of the Russian army, a flank that was now critically exposed after the Austro-German conquest of Galicia. Once taken, Ivangorod would be the beginning of the end of the Russian army in the Polish salient. Heavily outdated against modern artillery, the forts had become a death trap for the Russian soldiers.[26]

Dawson's notebook starts on 17 July 1915, when he left for the headquarters of the Austrian KuK Kriegspressequartier at Teschen. All war correspondents had to report there before they could attach themselves to the army. His military pass allowed him to travel to the front by all means available. It was a key document ("Offene Ordre"), describing his final destination, his credentials and how much time he had to follow the Austrian army. Each time Dawson checked in his pass was signed. This way he could be traced by the military, if necessary. The diary shows that his job was a race against the clock. To cover the campaign from the military headquarters at Radom, Dawson had only two weeks time. This deadline urged him on and – above all – it made him improvise.

Patience was not a virtue with Albert Dawson, who presented himself in his personal diary as a very committed war correspondent. His journey to Ivangorod started off on the wrong foot. First, his camera assistant failed to show up – the Austrians told Dawson they had checked with Berlin and had found him an unreliable person. The research for his credentials had cost Dawson six days. He also lost 250 Deutsch Marks, the down payment he had given his assistant. Without any further assistance from the army he was told to board the next train heading for the Russian border.

Around midnight Dawson reached the town of Trzebinia, where he slept in a lice-infested bed. "Those Cossack bugs! Russian Poland is full of them", he noted, "and while some people are not troubled they love me like milk attracts a cat!".[27] All trains from Trzebinia were military. He was free to board them, but had to use a map because the destination was a military secret. Dawson confessed he sometimes paid a bribe so that he would be warned in time to change trains. The wagons were usually third class, made of wood, quite primitive and with hardly any seats. When the train was loaded with soldiers they huddled together on the floor, using their comrades as a cushion. The sight reminded Dawson of a group of piglets sleeping close to each other. If possible, he preferred to sleep alone in a horse wagon, which gave him more space to deposit his baggage.

Fig. 7. Dawson's photographic outfit during the campaign in Galicia. From *Deutsch-Amerika*, 6 January 1917.

Filming the Great War in 1915 meant travelling with a lot of equipment. Getting sufficient film stock wasn't the problem, noted Dawson. He could buy enough through the Kodak agencies in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest. As far as regular photographs were concerned, for a while he used a Graflex, but he found this type of plate camera too difficult to carry while riding on horse-back at the front. Most of his still pictures were therefore taken with a 3A Autographic roll-film Kodak, a compact and popular

model widely used at the time by amateur photographers. Judging from publicity pictures in the film trade press, Dawson probably cranked a Moy & Bastie motion picture camera.[28]

During the military drive in Galicia, Dawson had used a horse-drawn wagon to carry his cumbersome photographic outfit. Now, in Russian Poland, the situation was very similar:

> My baggage is a great problem in this line of work. I cut it down to the bare essentials. But even then the total weight is about 200 pounds. There are five pieces, not including the hand camera which I always wear around my shoulders. First there is my film camera that is packed in a box; second the tripod; third a packet of four reserve motion-picture films also containing toilet articles, underwear, Kodak films, flash lights, a torch light, a box of cigars and a bottle of cognac (they come in handy as a present), powder for developing the films and finally a screw driver for my camera.
>
> Then I carry a big piece of hard sausage, or "salami" as the Hungarians call it; a couple of boxes of sardines, cheese, some pounds of chocolate; insecticide powder; a bunch of illustrated magazines from Germany and the United States; a red light to change the films. Attached to all this baggage, I have a big and warm travelling blanket which is made of camel hair. My biggest piece of luggage is a sack of about three feet high, made of brown sailing cloth. There are handles on both sides. In it, there is my reserve supply of motion-picture films, as well as more clothes, a blanket, extra boxes of sardines, a sweater. It is always full. And I always need two men to carry this sack. Because there is no porter at the firing line, you better make sure you don't lose these guys out of sight.[29]

The end of the line came in Kaminna, a small village of just six houses. Five of them had been destroyed by the Russians on their retreat. This was where the actual war zone had begun a few weeks earlier when the Austrians started their offensive into Poland. Dawson reported how the Russians had blown up the railroad tracks. In Galicia, he had filmed scenes showing how the Austrian army laid down new tracks and built pontoon bridges, using new techniques which he later described for *Scientific American*. But now he didn't have the time to wait another week and photograph these scenes. He had to get to the front as fast as possible. Hitch-hiking his way north on the back of a truck driven by a drunken Hungarian, he reached the city of Radom on the evening of 25 July 1915.

Radom was the Austrian army headquarters for the drive to Ivangorod, and the proper stepping stone to get to the front. But Dawson was disappointed to find out he had to wait another two days. There was no military car going up to the Division and the Austrians were too busy to help him. He also wasn't allowed to film inside the city of Radom. When he finally arrived at the Divisional Staff, he was quartered on a farm and supplied with a soldier ("Ordonnanz") who assisted him with his photographic work. The Divisional General, described by the American as a genuine Austrian aristocrat, invited him that evening as his special guest to join him for dinner together with his military staff.

Dawson was now about ten miles from the Austrian artillery that was shelling the forts of Ivangorod. In the distance he could hear the roaring guns. But there were still no cars going to the front. Dawson wrote:

> My biggest problem during this journey and in fact during all campaigns so far has been lack of transportation. I could have taken double the amount of footage if I had a car. But in this war each train, each horse, each car has a specific purpose. And there are no cars reserved for photographers. It is a particular problem during this campaign, because we are cut off here by the Russians from any train connections.[30]

So far, Dawson had only been able to film a few scenes behind the lines. Although the war was a serious business, some of his experiences provided him with comic relief. While at Divisional Headquarters he filmed an inspection by Archduke Frederick, Commander in Chief of the Austrian army. He had photographed him before when the Archduke was in Galicia, but this time the Austrians decided to embellish his visit by bringing in a musical band. One of the musicians had a donkey that carried his drums. To the utmost dismay of the military staff the donkey galloped away while the band was marching past the Archduke. Dawson suggested they re-enact the chase after the stubborn animal for the camera, but

Fig. 8. Austrian troops building a bridge across the river Bug. Frame enlargement from *Battles of A Nation*. [©American Correspondent Film Company, November 1915. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.]

apparently the Austrians didn't follow his suggestion. Another colourful scene was when he filmed the Kolo, a dance by the Ruthenian soldiers from the Ukraine.

On 1 August, Dawson left Divisional Headquarters for a visit to the Russian trenches, borrowing the horse-drawn wagon that was used by the General. About four miles away from headquarters he filmed the old Russian lines. Parts of this scene have been found in the Library of Congress's John E. Allen collection in Culpeper, Virginia. Although the description attached to the nitrate film cans indicates that the editor only used some pictures showing Dawson inspecting the ruined Russian trenches, Dawson was in fact very much impressed by the way the enemy had constructed these defences. "The breastworks were remarkably modern", noted Dawson, "and I have taken some really great pictures of these trenches".[31] On the same day he also photographed the site of the battle against the Russians that had taken place two days before. From a photographic point of view, remarked Dawson, it was a major disappointment. The dead had been removed from the battlefield; it looked just like a regular field.

Dawson now had only a couple of days left to film the campaign; the deadline was pressing him on. The river Vistula that divided the Austrians from the Russians was nearby. Dawson went ahead on horseback and filmed the military engineers building a pontoon-bridge across the river. The next day, he filmed Polish refugees fleeing across this bridge with their flocks of animals, as well as the ruined village of Kazimierz that had been burned by the Russians. The Austrian army broke up camp on 3 August. All his photographic equipment was packed in a wagon, so he couldn't make any films of the advance that day. But when Dawson arrived at his ultimate destination he could hear the Russian machine guns from across the river. He had finally arrived near the firing line, just in time.

From an observation balloon at an altitude of about 400 feet, Dawson took some panoramic pictures of the firing line. He couldn't see the actual siege of the city of Ivangorod because of the distance and the cloudy weather. But he was close enough to witness the Austrian artillery shelling the outer forts and the effects of the devastating bombardment. Together with his soldier-helper, Dawson set up the motion-picture camera and filmed the howitzers in action on the banks of the river. Then, on 6 August, he entered the frontline trenches which were just a few yards away from the river. The Austrians had recently dug these trenches and all seemed to be quiet on this sector of the Eastern Front. Dawson

decided to crawl to the river and photograph a broken bridge across the Vistula. His account of what happened next is worth quoting:

> Near the river there were some small bushes, so I thought it would be a good idea to hide there. Just before I arrived on the spot, feeling very brave, I heard some shots being fired from across the river. The bullets flew above my head and they sounded like a swarm of angry bees. That's when my legs took control of the situation. Without waiting for my instructions, they decided to get me back as fast as possible to the trenches. I didn't count how many shots were fired at me. But immediately after the Russians had opened fire, I heard the rat-a-tat-a-tat of a Russian machine gun, shooting 300 rounds a minute. I took cover behind a tree and was lying flat on the ground. Was I scared? You bet I was!
>
> The Russians only fired for a couple of minutes, because they didn't want to waste their ammunition on a single person. But it felt like ages. Then I heard the voice of an Austrian soldier, telling me to keep lying down until the sun had disappeared behind a cloud. That way, the Russians couldn't see my shadow through the bushes, once I rushed back. When I arrived safely in the trenches, the Austrians had a good laugh and said the enemy was playing a joke on me. Well, I certainly didn't agree with their sense of humour.[32]

On 8 August the moment came for Dawson to leave the war zone. Warsaw, as well as Ivangorod, had just been taken. The American realized that he was only 80 miles away from the Polish capital and could be one of the few film correspondents to witness the historic event. Like Przemysl, where he claimed he was the first cameraman to film the capture of this city, Dawson had a possible scoop too attractive to neglect. The Warsaw frontline was under the command of the German army. If he went by the book, he would have to get a permit from the General Staff in Berlin, after first visiting Teschen and Vienna. By that time the fall of Warsaw wouldn't make any headlines. So Dawson attached himself directly to the German command of the sector, even offering 1,000 Deutsch Marks for the German Red Cross if he could join them. But his hopes vanished when he found that the Germans were not prepared to let him use a military car.

Lack of fast transportation remained a major obstacle for Dawson in filming the European war. But so too were the entanglements of military control. His attempt at Ivangorod to bypass the official authorities and get the necessary permit directly from the German field command was quite typical for the resourceful way he operated. Although his diary shows that Dawson took care to establish good working relations with the Austrians, there was always one overriding priority for him: to get the picture. A similar incident took place in October 1915, when Dawson requested permission at the KuK Kriegspressequartier to follow the Austrian offensive into Serbia. When this request was turned down, he went to the war archives in Vienna. Against all proper procedures, they gave him a permit which allowed him to follow the Austrian army until 1 December 1915. When the KuK Kriegespressequartier found out about this, they went out of their way to frustrate Dawson's film work in the Balkans. On 3 November 1915, all his films were confiscated in Belgrade and Dawson was shipped back to Germany.[33] Not to be outmanoeuvred, Dawson bypassed the Austrians a second time when he went to Sofia by way of neutral Romania. Attaching himself to the Bulgarian army, he slipped quietly through the back door of the Habsburg Empire and witnessed the defeat of the Serbian army, travelling cross country into the mountains of Albania dressed like a native Bulgar.

The Warring Millions

Dawson's published war diary breaks off on 12 August 1915, when he delivers his footage to the war archives in Vienna for inspection by the censors. The final question remains: what has become of these films? By the time Dawson returned to the United States in the spring of 1916 the American Correspondent Film Company was practically bankrupt. High expenditures and a lack of new films had combined to turn the company's business operations into a financial disappointment. The last movie filmed by Dawson for the American Correspondent Film Company was *The Warring Millions*. A synopsis later used by the Mutual Film Corporation as part of the copyright application pinpoints Dawson's experiences during the making of this film. Not only does the description reveal the propaganda message edited into Dawson's film, stressing the combined strength of the German and Austrian armies, but it also gives an idea of how a sufficiently entertaining story line was made from Dawson's footage:

Fig. 9. Camouflaged 15 cm. Austrian mortar in action. Frame enlargement from *Battles of A Nation*. [©American Correspondent Film Company, November 1915. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.]

A.K. Dawson, camera correspondent attached to the Austro-Hungarian armies, leaves Berlin and proceeds to Ivangorod. On his way to the front Dawson observes intensive farming system organized in conquered Poland. At Radom soldiers' encampment is made and preparations are gone through for the assault on Ivangorod. The next day camp breaks up. A captive balloon is used to get the enemy's range. Dawson is allowed to go up on this important venture. Aviators equipped with bombs are also sent up to destroy the Russian outposts. German field gun in foremost trenches bombards the enemy's position.

Terrific onslaught of the Russians compels Teutonic commander to ask for more troops, but wires are broken. A volunteer rides forth to carry the message through. In the meantime wires are repaired. Air scouts report vantage point and the big Austrian guns begin bombardment of Ivangorod. The volunteer arrives at the destination and the Austro-Hungarian commander sends reinforcements. The German commander also receives word that more infantry is needed at once, and they are sent. Reinforcements arrive in the nick of time and turn the tide of battle. Ivangorod falls. The Russian forts are a mass of ruins. Wounded are taken from field shelters to well equipped hospitals. Dawson inspects smouldering ruins and is also shown Russian system of trenches. Archduke Frederick reviews army. Pictures of Russian prisoners are made. The final scene depicts a cemetery where representatives of different faiths unite to pay homage to the dead.[34]

When *The Warring Millions* premiered at the Olympic Theatre in Chicago in December 1915, the producers advertised it as a huge success. *Variety* reported that the police were brought in to hold back the crowds.[35] Dawson's film actually resulted in a full-scale riot, but the reason was somewhat different than that suggested by the publicity writers. The Olympic had been paid a full month in advance by the *Buffalo Times* in order to show Dawson's film. However, because of some technical flaws in the film print, the movie had to be sent back to the studio. Trying to make some money for the rest of the period, the newspaper wanted to sublet the theatre and show a French war film instead. When the owners of the Olympic refused to cooperate, some twenty-five police men, a hundred Pinkerton detectives and a

legal injunction were necessary to enter the theatre by the fire escape. This in turn triggered the Hearst press, which was showing a similar French war documentary nearby, to marshal two hundred men. Armed with searchlights they were instructed to buy as many tickets as possible and prepare to wreck the theatre. A confrontation with Hearst's forces was avoided at the last moment when the management decided to close the Olympic.[36]

Reviews of Dawson's *The Warring Millions* were mixed. Kitty Kelly, describing the documentary for the *Chicago Tribune*, called the film a mistake in nomenclature. Instead of millions of fighting Teutons, the actual war scenes were so few that the producers should have called it "The Warring Hundreds". With the exception of a short scene showing the infantry storming Ivangorod, most of the film pictured the preparations for the siege.

> There is marching and drilling of soldiers, shooting of big guns, masking of guns under cut grain, a balloon ascension, people going across a pontoon bridge and back again, many heaps of debris, and A.K. Dawson, the intrepid photographic war correspondent who spent a good deal of time in front of the camera. A messenger on horseback who is madly galloping across grassy turf and soft dirt roads, does so with much interpretive clatter of hoof beats rendered by the inspired [musical] "effects". Another stir up was made in the economical use of the one picture of an exploding shell from the big guns. That explosion gets to be very familiar.[37]

Despite the lively orchestra, *The Warring Millions* had only a seven day run in Chicago. During the 1915 Christmas holiday the film was also shown at the Tech Theatre in Buffalo, New York. The exhibition rights had been bought by the *Buffalo Times* for a one-week show running continuously from 11:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M every day. The newspaper, admittedly a biased source, gave the movie extensive publicity, calling attention to the realism and such exhilarating scenes as the battle of a German airship and an aeroplane. "How the Central Powers crowd out a victory by the quick bringing up of reinforcements creates a fine basis for thrills. Never before has such a mass of action been assembled in any gathering of war films. They fairly burn with truth."[38]

In May 1916 the *Buffalo Times* joined forces with the Mutual Film Corporation and Dawson's film *The Warring Millions* was revamped as *The Fighting Germans*. Together with Mutual, the syndication department of the newspaper now arranged for a nationwide publicity campaign. As reported in *Motion Picture News*, exhibitors booking this five-reel feature film would benefit substantially from this plan.[39] Ironically, this time the film was promoted as a preparedness picture, showing the reasons why the American people had to strengthen their army. The publicity even went as far as to suggest that the government wanted to ban this film. After the sinking of the *Lusitania*, public opinion among many Americans had taken a sharp turn in favour of the Allies, and by 1916 the Germans were losing ground on the American film propaganda front. Considering the fact that the American Correspondent Film Company, the original producer of this movie, was financed by the German government, this new release was indeed a total make-over, as can be seen in the way the film was advertised (Fig. 10). In the trade press much attention was given to the official character of the film production. A sensational two page advertisement in *Moving Picture World* described the film as the "Giant Thriller of Actual Warfare – Presented by Mutual Film Corporation, with the distinct guarantee that they were taken at the front under government supervision by A.K. Dawson, the most daring camera correspondent in the European War".[40]

Research on the John E. Allen film collection in Culpeper (Virginia) has revealed some fascinating glimpses from *The Fighting Germans*.[41] Apart from a scene picturing Albert Dawson visiting the frontline trenches near Ivangorod, footage has been found of military camp life during this campaign at the Eastern Front. Particularly interesting are the scenes of the siege artillery in action. The famous German Krupp 15 cm howitzers are shown being manned by Austrian gunners. The effect of the bombardment is demonstrated with scenes of fire and destruction. It seems that Dawson's films were culled after the First World War, because most of the footage is out of place. In the Dawson collection, there are also scenes from wartime Berlin, including originally – before it was cut away for an historical documentary – an intriguing bit of film of Sir Roger Casement, the famous Irish revolutionary, filmed sitting at a desk signing papers. While in Germany, Casement spent most of his time trying to recruit an Irish Brigade to fight against the British. On 22 April 1916, shortly before the release of the *Fighting Germans*, he was arrested after he was smuggled into Ireland on a

MUTUAL SPECIAL
THE FIGHTING
MARVELOUS FILMS OF THE WORLD WAR'S GREATEST BATTLE ON THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN FRONT
IN FIVE ACTS
REAL—AUTHENTIC—OFFICIAL
WAR FEATURE
THE GIANT THRILLER OF ACTUAL WARFARE
A STUPENDOUS PRODUCTION OF SPECTACULAR BATTLE SCENES TAKEN UNDER FIRE
THE BOMBARDMENT, CAPTURE AND FALL OF IVANGOROD
GERMANS
Picture Presented By
MUTUAL FILM CORPORATION
WITH THE DISTINCT GUARANTEE THAT THEY WERE TAKEN AT THE FRONT UNDER GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION
by A.K. DAWSON
THE ONLY PICTURES IN THE COUNTRY SHOWING THE HORRORS OF A DESPERATELY FOUGHT BATTLE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING TO THE VERY END
RELEASED MAY 8TH
MUTUAL FILM CORPORATION
Gentlemen—Please send complete information regarding the manner in which my theatre may present "The Fighting Germans" in connection with a leading newspaper in this city.

Fig. 10. Advertisement for *The Fighting Germans* (*Moving Picture World*, 13 May 1916): 1120–1121. Note the background picture of the infantry attack, previously used in Dawson's film *The Battle and Fall of Przemysl*.

German submarine and had tried to land a secret cargo of weapons for the Irish rebels. Apparently, the Mutual Film Corporation had decided to incorporate this scene of Casement – photographed by Dawson in early 1915 – into the new film version, because his arrest at the time and the Easter Rising in Ireland was a much discussed news story.

Although fragmentary, what remains of Dawson's film correspondence is enough to justify further research and the transfer of these scenes from the original nitrate film to safety stock. Apart from the films described in this article, and an historical collection of frames and photographs taken from his films *The Battle and Fall of Przemysl* and *Battles of A Nation* (released November 1915), most of Dawson's footage is considered lost, which makes the testimony of these remaining films even more valuable.

Film flashes

Albert Dawson's work during World War I shows the difficulties encountered by cameramen while filming at the front. As Dawson's diary demonstrates, film correspondents – even though they had the necessary papers – were often hampered by their heavy equipment and lack of mobility. They had to adapt to circumstances and relied a great deal on their resourcefulness. Apart from the inherent danger and the complications of censorship, the War was so enormous that to capture even a few "flashes" of the actual frontline experience was a major accomplishment. Dawson's story also provides us with an interesting case study showing how propaganda and regular war correspondence were intertwined.

When the Great War ended in November 1918, cameramen like Dawson were quickly lost from sight. People in Europe and the United States simply wanted to forget about the War and move on with their life. Dawson himself left the photographic business in 1922 and started a new career in the tourist trade in New York City. In 1923 he married Clara Hawkey, a merchant's daughter from Poughkeepsie, New York. They had a son, Robert Dawson (1925–1980), who shared his father's interest in technology and became a military engineer for the United States government. In the 1930s, Albert Dawson worked for the American Express Company as a manager of the new Russian travel division. He visited the USSR at a time when very few Americans had seen the Soviet Union, and despite political tensions with the United States was instrumental in promoting tourism to that country. In collaboration with the *Washington Post*, Dawson also did a series of popular lectures on his travels to exotic destinations. In

October 1934 his presentation of films and coloured slides on "The Romance of the West Indies" at the Masonic Auditorium attracted over 1,000 people. During the Second World War Dawson went to Chile where he was a summer school teacher for students in South America. Because of his many travels abroad, Dawson became friends with newsreel reporter and radio broadcaster Lowell Thomas. Both men had a common experience in having filmed the First World War. In fact, Lowell Thomas's dramatic 1918 footage of T.E. Lawrence was a key factor in creating the public image of the enigmatic "Lawrence of Arabia". Until late in his life Albert Dawson remained what he had been from the start of his career: an energetic globetrotter. He died in Queens, New York City, on 1 February 1967.

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Notes

1. Ron van Dopperen, "Shooting the Great War. Albert Dawson and the American Correspondent Film Company", *Film History*, 4.2 (1990): 123–129.
2. Our Illustrations", *Photo-Era* (May 1917): 256.
3. Letter from Albert K. Dawson, 27 July 1947 in *Thomas A. Dawson. His Memoirs and Diary*. Collected by Rose Dawson-Schultheis. Courtesy of the Knox County Public Library, Vincennes, Indiana.
4. "Notes and News", *Photo-Era*, vol. 26 (1911): 313. Albert Dawson was president of the Camera Club in 1911 and 1912. Established in 1904, the club organized a yearly photo exposition and meetings for photographers twice a month. *The American Annual of Photography* in 1912 listed the Camera Club with 65 members.
5. Emmet Crozier, *American Reporters on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (New York: Oxford University Press 1959), 97–98.
6. Albert K. Dawson, "Economic Conditions in Germany", *Scientific American* (3 February 1917) : 122. Hereafter given as Dawson, "Economic Conditions".
7. On 9 October 1914, Theyer's employer Oskar Messter released the first official war newsreel in Germany. Together with the General Staff, Messter had devised a licensing contract which closely controlled all production and distribution of war footage. Not surprisingly, two cinematographers from Messter's studio received exclusive rights to take motion pictures at the Western Front. See also: David A. Welch, *Cinema and Society in Imperial Germany, 1905–1918*, http://gh.oxfordjournals.org/content/8/1/28.full.pdf
8. Hans Theyer, "Erinnerungen eines Kameramannes", *Mein Film*, no. 168 (1929): 10. All quotes translated from German. Hereafter given as Hans Theyer. Dawson's and Theyer's footage taken at the Western Front is now at the John E. Allen Archives in Park Ridge (New Jersey), tapes: 1WO5, 1WO6, 1W14.
9. Robert Dunn, *Five Fronts. On the Firing-Lines with English-French, Austrian, German and Russian Troops* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company 1915), 163 – 172. Also present among the American journalists was John Reed, who wrote a brief account of this visit in the March 1915 issue of *The Masses*: "Another time a photographer of our party was interrupted, while taking moving pictures, by a sentry with a rifle. 'My orders are that no photographs shall be taken here!', said the soldier. The photographer appealed to the Staff Lieutenant who accompanied us. 'It's all right', said the officer, 'I am Lieutenant Herrmann of the General Staff in Berlin. He has my permission to photograph'."
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13. Francis Arnold Collins, *The Camera Man: His Adventures in Many Fields* (New York: The Century Company 1919, reprint 2010), 24–25.
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20. "Dawson Relates War Experiences", *Stamford Daily Advocate* (21 June 1916): 2.
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25. Editorial on Albert K. Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod", *Deutsch-Amerika* (6 January 1917): 2. Hereafter given as Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod". All subsequent quotes translated from German.
26. Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914–1917* (London: Penguin Books 1998), 174–175.
27. Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod", *Deutsch-Amerika* (6 January 1917): 5.
28. A publicity picture of Dawson with the Bulgarian army in Serbia was published in *Moving Picture World* (22 April 1916): 627. See also: *Variety* (31 March 1916): 22.
29. Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod", *Deutsch-Amerika* (6 January 1917): 6.
30. Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod", *Deutsch-Amerika* (20 January 1917): 20.
31. Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod", *Deutsch-Amerika* (27 January 1917): 20.
32. Dawson, "Die Reise Nach Ivangorod", *Deutsch-Amerika* (3 February 1917): 19.
33. Anton Holzer, *Die Andere Front. Fotografie und Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag 2007), 27–29.
34. Synopsis of *The Fighting Germans* (Mutual Film Corporation, 1916). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
35. "Film Flashes", *Variety* (10 December 1915): 20.
36. "Detectives Storm Theatre in War Over War Movies", *Chicago Tribune* (7 December 1915): 1. See also: "Enter Theatre By Fire Escape to Show Film", *Chicago Tribune* (5 December 1915): 6.
37. "Flickerings from Film Land", *Chicago Tribune* (4 December 1915): 19.
38. "The Glories of War, Its Horrors and Many Vicissitudes Viewed", *Buffalo Evening Times* (18 December 1915): 4.
39. "Newspaper Promotion for 'Fighting Germans'", *Motion Picture News* (20 May 1916): 3042. For some information on the exhibition of this movie see also Richard Abel, "Charge and Countercharge: 'Documentary' War Pictures in the USA, 1914–1916", *Film History* 22.4 (2010): 366–388.
40. Advertisement for *The Fighting Germans*, *Moving Picture World* (13 May 1916): 1120–1121.
41. John E. Allen Collection. Inventory entry: E-67 ALL code 4311-WW. Library of Congress, MBRS Division, MAVIS number 1831450. Title: *WWI: Germany-Berlin & Russian Front – Dawson. WWI. Germany Dawson-Everett*. One reel has remained which is to be restored and copied by the Library of Congress. Research by the authors on 18 February 2011 has shown that parts of *The Fighting Germans* were cut out in 1963 for a BBC documentary. Two scenes from Dawson's *The Battles of a Nation* have recently been located in BBC's *The Great War* (1964).

Abstract: Film Flashes of the European Front: The War Diary of Albert K. Dawson, 1915–1916,
by Ron van Dopperen and Cooper C. Graham

Albert K. Dawson (1885–1967) was an American photographer from Vincennes, Indiana, who started his career in 1912. His firm Brown & Dawson supplied films and news photographs of the First World War's Western and Eastern fronts, taken by Dawson between January 1915 and February 1916 with the aid of the German, Austrian and Bulgarian armies. The paper examines Dawson's experiences during World War I based on excerpts from his published diary and other documentary sources, as well as portions of his films recently discovered in the Library of Congress's John E. Allen collection.

Key words: Albert K. Dawson, World War I documentary films, American Correspondent Film Company, Hans Theyer, Przemysl, Ivangorod, *The Warring Millions, The Fighting Germans*, Mutual Film Corporation.

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